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MADISON PARISH CLERK OF COURT INDICTED ON FEDERAL CHARGES

*Caldwell is accused of using public funds
to pay personal expenses*

Shreveport, Louisiana . . . A federal grand jury has returned an indictment charging **CAROLYN CALDWELL**, age 62, of Tallulah, Louisiana, with mail fraud, United States Attorney Donald W. Washington announced today. CALDWELL is currently serving in the elected position of Madison Parish Clerk of Court.

The four-count indictment alleges that from February 2000 to June 2004, CALDWELL defrauded the Madison Parish Clerk of Court's Office by misusing the Clerk's Office funds for her own personal benefit, as well as that of her family and friends.

It is alleged in the indictment that CALDWELL attended the "Nuts and Bolts" Seminar in June of 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004 in Destin, Florida. It is further alleged that on each of these trips CALDWELL took friends and family members who were not authorized to attend the conference and CALDWELL and her friends and family stayed extra nights each year. On each trip, CALDWELL paid for the additional people to travel with her, as well as for condominiums to house these friends and family

members, with funds from the Madison Parish Clerk of Court. A report issued in October 2005 by the Louisiana Office of Legislative Auditor revealed that CALDWELL used \$12,320 of the Madison Parish Clerk of Court's funds to the personal benefit of she and her family and friends as a result of these trips.

An indictment is merely an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty. Defendants are entitled to a presumption of innocence under the law, and the government has the burden of proving every element of the charges beyond a reasonable doubt.

If convicted, CALDWELL faces a sentence of not more than 20 years, a \$250,000 fine, or both, on each count.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Monroe Resident Agency, and the Louisiana Office of Legislative Auditor, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney C. Mignonne Griffing.

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